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Chairman: Mr. García González (Vice-Chairman) (El Salvador)

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In the absence of Mr. Al-Hinai (Oman), Mr. García González (El Salvador), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

Agenda item 109: Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing *(continued)* (A/C.3/56/L.6/Rev.1 and L.19)

Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.6/Rev.1: Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing, and programme-budget implications in document A/C.3/56/L.19

1. **Ms. Newell** (Secretary of the Committee) read out the oral revision that had been made to the text when the draft resolution had been introduced. The programme-budget implications were contained in document A/C.3/56/L.19.

2. **Mr. Alaei** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Spain and Sweden wished to join the sponsors.

3. **The Chairman** announced that Andorra, Belarus, Croatia, Monaco, Norway, Portugal, the Russian Federation, San Marino, Ukraine and Viet Nam also wished to join the sponsors.

4. *Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.6/Rev.1, as orally revised, was adopted.*

5. **Ms. Sim** (United States of America) said that her delegation regretted that it must dissociate itself from the consensus on the draft resolution because of the budgetary implications of the new paragraph which had been added. The public information campaign for the Second World Assembly on Ageing could and should be funded from existing resources.

6. **Ms. Mudie** (Australia), speaking also on behalf of New Zealand and Canada, said that the delegations for which she spoke remained strongly supportive of the draft resolution, but the reintroduction of the additional paragraph had created significant budgetary implications. The public information activities should be funded from the $140-million budget of the Department of Public Information. Therefore, those delegations regretted that they could not join the sponsors.

7. **Ms. Hashimoto** (Japan) said that the public-information campaign was one of the most important activities relating to the Second World Assembly on Ageing, and therefore her delegation had joined the consensus on the draft resolution. However, it was concerned about the programme budget implications, which should be carefully considered in the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee.

Agenda item 116: Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People *(continued)* (A/C.3/56/L.30)

Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.30: International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

8. **The Chairman** said that there were no programme-budget implications.

9. **Ms. Newell** (Secretary of the Committee) read out the correction that had been made when the draft resolution had been introduced.

10. **Mr. Hahn** (Denmark) said that Armenia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua had joined the sponsors.

11. *Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.30, as orally corrected, was adopted.*

Agenda item 119: Human rights questions *(continued)*

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms *(continued)* (A/56/168, 190, 204, 207 and Add.1, 209, 212, 230, 253, 254 and Add.1, 255, 256, 258, 263, 271, 292, 310, 334, 341 and 344)

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives *(continued)* (A/56/210, 217, 220, 278, 281, 312, 327, 336, 337, 340, 409 and Add.1, 440, 460, 479 and 505; A/C.3/56/4 and 7)

(d) Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action *(continued)* (A/56/36 and Add.1)

(e) Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (*continued*) (A/56/36 and Add.1)

12. **Mr. Baum** (Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Sudan), introducing his interim report (A/56/336), said that the situation of human rights in the Sudan continued to be a matter of serious concern, in spite of the efforts towards democratization made in 1999 and 2000, including the adoption of a new Constitution. Human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law, partly related to the ongoing conflict, had continued. Denial of humanitarian access was a major problem: the Nuba Mountains, southern Blue Nile state and Eastern Equatoria remained inaccessible.

13. He had also received information about serious disregard of international humanitarian law by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and Liberation Army (SPLM/A) and allied militias, particularly in oil-rich western Upper Nile, where the population had no choice but to flee. Their situation was appalling, and none of the dislocated families appeared to have received any compensation, despite government assurances. Although the oil companies provided infrastructure to the local population in oil-rich areas, oil exploitation continued to have a negative impact on the human rights situation. In addition, there was no concrete evidence that oil revenues were being spent for the development of the south.

14. He had been informed that, while the heinous practice of abduction continued, the numbers had decreased over the past six months. Some progress had been made on the issue of children abducted by a Ugandan resistance group, and the Government was actively engaged in locating and retrieving escapees.

15. During his visit to Khartoum, he had gathered information on the transition to democracy through meetings with representatives of the Government, civil society and the political opposition. Newspapers were still subject to daily censorship and journalists were often summoned by the security forces. Members of the opposition continued to be harassed, despite the President's decision to drop charges against National Democratic Alliance members and the former speaker of the National Assembly, Hassan al-Turabi. In addition, he had learned of a crackdown against those representatives of non-governmental organizations whom he had met during his visit. Finally, despite general agreement that there was no religious persecution as such, churches did face some difficulties.

16. Civil structures, legal administration and law enforcement, particularly the police, needed strengthening. Existing judiciary structures were very weak, with fewer than 100 lawyers in all of southern Sudan, although some progress was being made. An election was expected to take place in the south in December 2001 or January 2002, but it could not yet be considered democratic, since most positions were filled by appointment.

17. The conflict in the Sudan, although it included a religious component, did not have religious roots. Rather, it was based on competing and conflicting claims by different ethnic groups for control of and access to resources and ultimately, power. He had continued to collect information on the peace process at the grass-roots level, and was pleased at the positive trend. The initiatives brokered by the New Sudan Council of Churches were holding. Many of the human rights violations were linked to the war, and he shared the Secretary-General's view that humanitarian access, safety and protection of civilians must be guaranteed. He also concurred that, for the sake of the civilian population, humanitarian ceasefires must be reinstated. In that connection, he drew attention to the fact that the Sudan had the highest number of internally displaced persons in the world, and appealed to the international community for help.

18. Among recommendations for further action, the issue of abduction should be seriously addressed. The Government, while distancing itself from the practice, must also take concrete measures to prevent new abductions. The Government should also concentrate on economic, social and cultural rights. While he could appreciate the importance of oil for the country's development, the right to development could not justify the disregard of other human rights. Thus far, it seemed that exploitation of the oil reserves had led to a worsening of the conflict. He urged the Government to revise its policy of strengthening security, particularly the amendment to the National Security Forces Act, to ensure the independence of the judiciary. By the same token, he encouraged the SPLM to develop genuine democratic structures, as a true civil society was essential to self-determination. He also urged the SPLM to take responsibility for the needs of people living in areas under its control. The political

opposition in the south should be given a chance to organize itself properly; he rejected the view that a multi-party system could not function in time of war, since most of southern Sudan was at peace. He also encouraged donors to invest in the development of civil society.

19. National reconciliation aimed at a just and durable peace should be a priority for both the Government and the SPLM. Strengthening of existing institutions and civil society was a key element in democratization. Good governance and a participatory approach remained paramount to the establishment of a sustainable peace. Internal opportunities for dialogue should be promoted at grass-roots level, while international bodies strengthened the peace process from the outside. Lastly, noting that women and children were suffering most in the current situation, he praised the work for peace of indigenous women's non-governmental organizations.

20. **Mr. Erwa** (the Sudan) said that his Government rejected categorically the politicization, selectivity and double standards applied in dealing with human rights issues in the United Nations. It was dismayed at the continued singling out of certain countries, all of which were developing countries, for criticism.

21. The Government welcomed the positive comments of the Special Rapporteur, especially his appreciation for the frank and open discussions and the cooperation extended to him during his visit. He had acknowledged a number of positive developments, including improvements in several areas related to human rights, the ability of opposition leaders and their parties to express their views openly, progress in the grass-roots peace process and greater press freedom. He had welcomed the Government's efforts to eradicate the practice of abduction. It was helpful that he had met with representatives of oil companies and visited their installations. The Government also welcomed the fact that the Special Rapporteur had admitted that the threat to civilians from aerial bombardment had decreased, and that there was no serious commitment to peace among most rebel leaders. The concerns expressed in previous reports regarding the rebels did not seem to have changed. Finally, it welcomed the emphasis on the strengthening of existing institutions as a key element in democratization.

22. The root causes of the concerns expressed by the Special Rapporteur lay in the ongoing conflict in southern Sudan. The Government was ready to renew its acceptance of an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire. In explanation of some of those concerns, he said that the amendment to the National Security Forces Act had been passed because a terrorist group had taken advantage of the leniency of the old act. Most of the individual cases raised did not involve human rights violations, since the individuals concerned were facing criminal charges. Civilian casualties from aerial bombardments resulted from the use of civilian premises by the rebels for military purposes. The Government had taken steps to decrease such incidents, but the rebels continued their indiscriminate use of artillery, resulting in even more civilian casualties. It was regrettable that those casualties had gone unnoticed by the Special Rapporteur. The Government had agreed to Operation Lifeline Sudan, which provided relief even to areas under rebel control. Flights had been denied on rare occasions for security reasons, but the real problems were caused by the rebels, who had diverted food, taken hostages, killed humanitarian personnel and imposed fees on non-governmental organizations delivering humanitarian assistance.

23. Oil exploitation had guaranteed more rights to the local population, in particular the right to food, housing, education, health care and freedom of movement. Private land was acquired by the oil industry under a 1930 law promulgated long before the Sudan had gained its independence. People living in those areas considered themselves fortunate to have access to services, benefits and job opportunities. Currently the only reason for population displacement around the oilfields was rebel attacks. The most recent major displacements had occurred as a result of the rebel invasion of the town of Raga.

24. His Government considered that the Special Rapporteur's conclusions on the oil issue were particularly striking: that the exploitation of oil had turned into a war for oil with a negative impact on human rights. The Sudan had been engaged in oil exploration and exploitation for more than 30 years, aided by reputable international oil companies. The claim that the Sudanese oil industry was fuelling the war machine appeared to be a repetition of the unfounded allegations of certain groups, which were calling on the oil companies to stop their work in the country. His Government was trying to achieve sustainable development throughout the country

despite the ongoing war and other developing-country problems, and it was using oil revenues to improve infrastructure and social services, particularly in the south. It categorically rejected the suggestion that there was a link between oil exploitation and human rights violations, which was part of a campaign to deprive the Sudanese of their right to use the country's natural resources to eradicate poverty, thereby eliminating one of the principal causes of the conflict.

25. His Government was alarmed by the Special Rapporteur's statement in paragraph 47 of the report that he remained interested in receiving evidence on how oil revenues were spent and would investigate the matter further during his next visit. Issues concerning national budgetary matters related to the sovereignty of each country and the Special Rapporteur should not attempt to exceed his mandate.

26. It was notable that all the positive aspects mentioned by the Special Rapporteur had been learned from direct access to information and areas he considered of interest, while the information on the more negative aspects had been gleaned from email and facsimile messages coming from unspecified and unverifiable sources. One glaring example was the section on the oil issue and the disturbing conclusions he had reached after a mere three-hour visit to the oil area. Furthermore, whatever human rights violations were occurring, they were a regrettable consequence of the ongoing conflict, which the Government was seeking to end. However, that would require the collaboration of the international community, because pressure had to be exerted on the rebel movement, whose rejection of the Government's offers to implement a comprehensive ceasefire was the only obstacle to a lasting, peaceful and just solution to the conflict.

27. **Ms. Khalil** (Egypt) said that Egypt was concerned about the effects of the conflict in the Sudan and was convinced that a peaceful settlement would reinforce human rights in that country. Reconciliation efforts should therefore continue and it was important to support the Egyptian-Libyan initiative accepted by the Sudan, since it was a first step towards achieving a settlement of the conflict. In conclusion, she stressed the need to maintain the territorial integrity of the Sudan and the importance of non-interference in its internal affairs.

28. **Ms. Al Haj Ali** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the Special Rapporteur's report (A/56/336) appeared to dwell on the negative elements of the situation, whereas the positive developments had not merited attention; all aspects should have been dealt with equitably. Moreover, the indication, in paragraph 47, that the Special Rapporteur remained interested in receiving evidence on how oil revenues were spent and would be investigating the matter further constituted unacceptable intervention in the internal affairs of a sovereign State.

29. **Ms. Camponovo** (United States of America) said that the Special Rapporteur should comment on the current status of abducted women and children and inform the Committee how many of those abducted had returned home. He had called upon the Sudanese Government to take steps to prevent further abductions, and it would be useful to know whether he had any specific ideas on what would constitute appropriate measures. The report, in paragraph 52, referred to the negative role of the nomadic Arab tribes, the so-called Murahaleen, from which militias were formed, and their role in the destruction of food crops and the killings and abductions. Were such practices continuing? Lastly, she noted that representatives of Christian churches in neighbouring countries had voiced concern about discrimination, harassment and restrictions on freedom of religion in the Sudan, and it would be interesting to know the Sudanese Government's current policy with regard to educational institutions and the increasing religious characterization of education in the Sudan.

30. **Mrs. G/Mariam** (Ethiopia) said that, as a neighbour, Ethiopia was following political developments in the Sudan closely and appreciated the positive measures that the Government was taking, including the offer of a comprehensive ceasefire. It hoped that all the parties would come to the negotiating table. Peace in the Sudan signified stability in the subregion.

31. **Mrs. El-Hajjaji** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that she welcomed the reference in the report to the Egyptian-Libyan initiative (para. 16), as it could prove very useful. Libya was very concerned about events in southern Sudan, which had led to a number of human rights violations and halted development. However, it commended the Sudanese Government for offering a comprehensive ceasefire and for its readiness to enter into negotiations. Libya also welcomed the

Government's attempts to improve relations with neighbouring countries and other States and its willingness to set up a national human rights committee. Lastly, she underscored the need to assist civil society in the Sudan.

32. The Special Rapporteur had not advanced sufficient arguments to support the accusations that oil revenues were being used to fuel the conflict, and her delegation questioned whether it was within his mandate to require any Government to provide proof of how it disposed of its own resources.

33. **Ms. Stevens** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union welcomed the Special Rapporteur's first visit to southern Sudan, which had allowed him to collect information on the zone controlled by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and Liberation Army (SPLM/A). It would be useful if the Special Rapporteur would comment on the human rights situation in SPLM/A-held territories. Her delegation would also like to know whether the Special Rapporteur was planning to visit the internally displaced persons camps and the Nuba Mountains, as there had been reports of harassment by militia in those regions.

34. **Mr. Amorós Núñez** (Cuba), referring to paragraph 47, said that he, too, would like the Special Rapporteur to comment on whether he had exceeded his mandate. Further information about the elements on which the Special Rapporteur had based his remarks that exploitation of the oil reserves had led to a worsening of the conflict and to human rights violations (paras. 47, 105 and 108) would also be appreciated.

35. In paragraph 104, the Special Rapporteur had stated that the Sudanese Government should meet the requirements for readmission to international development aid. However, the civilian population of the Sudan were enduring very harsh conditions and it was important that the international community should support them. He therefore wished to know whether it was possible to provide international humanitarian aid in the current situation.

36. **Ms. Astanah Banu** (Malaysia), referring to the oil issue, said that she would like the Special Rapporteur to explain how the Sudanese Government could ensure the population's right to development if it ceased to export oil.

37. **Mr. Rogov** (Russian Federation), referring to paragraph 106 of the report, said that he did not understand how oil exploitation could have a negative impact on the human rights situation, when the oil companies were providing infrastructure to the local population in the oil-rich areas. While agreeing that the right to development could not justify the disregard of other human rights (para. 108), he considered that development could only promote the realization of other human rights.

38. **Mr. Afifi** (Morocco) said that it would be useful to know more about the sources of the information on which the Special Rapporteur's report was based, and their reliability.

39. **Mr. Boukar** (Chad) said that, as a neighbouring country, Chad was very concerned about events in the Sudan. He considered that the report was not sufficiently balanced and underrated the efforts of the Government of the Sudan to return the country to peace and respect for human rights. He joined the other delegations in expressing concern about the Special Rapporteur's thesis with regard to oil exploitation and considered that the latter should provide the Committee with further information to support it.

40. **Mr. Alaei** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that he welcomed the improvement in human rights in the Sudan. It was the international community's duty to help the Sudanese Government deal with its problems and end the conflict in the southern part of the country in order to guarantee the human rights of all individuals and groups throughout the territory. He was concerned that the Special Rapporteur had linked oil exploitation and human rights violations and surprised to see that he wished the Government to allow him to supervise how it spent oil revenues. That appeared to exceed his mandate and the Special Rapporteur should explain the legal basis for his proposal, since it could constitute a dangerous precedent in the current environment and be used against certain countries.

41. **Mr. Baum** (Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Sudan), replying to the questions, said that the legal basis for his recommendations (ibid., chap. V) was the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and that his particular concern was the right to development. He had referred in his report to a possible investigation of how oil revenues were used because the Sudanese Government had itself raised the issue by

stating that it invested them in the development of the south. The rebels for their part said that those revenues were spent on garrison towns, thus contributing to fuelling the conflict. The Government of the Sudan had also claimed that it used the money for the benefit of the huge numbers of internally displaced persons who came under the Special Rapporteur's mandate. It was inevitable that, in a war situation where the oilfields attracted aggression, people who had no other option would flee and become internally displaced. He asked the Government of the Sudan to produce conclusive evidence that it had indeed used the money for the purpose stated. At the same time he stressed that he had never asked the oil companies to stop extraction.

42. With reference to the overall humanitarian situation, while he had made a considerable number of positive observations in his report, some regions — the Nuba Mountains, for example, or the Upper Nile oil region where humanitarian aid was not guaranteed — remained forgotten. The food agencies deplored a situation in which they were not permitted to provide assistance.

43. Where the question of abductions was concerned, the number of incidents had decreased as a result of the better defence of villages by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and Liberation Army (SPLM/A). He would like to hear a statement from the Government of the Sudan condemning abductions and putting an end to that practice by the military. The Committee for the Eradication of Abduction of Women and Children had facilitated the return of some women and children but needed more money as well as authority and support from the Government to make real progress. He particularly wished to know if any persons had been brought to justice in connection with abductions.

44. Where freedom of religion was concerned, it was not true, as some Christian fundamentalists asserted, that a war of religion between Islam and Christianity was in progress; although some discrimination against Christians existed, churches had not been suppressed.

45. His meetings with several hundred people on his most recent visit had shown him how complicated the situation was in the Sudan. His concern was with facts; for example, he would like the Government to answer allegations on individual cases of human rights violations. He was, after all, an advocate for human rights sufferers and shared the goal of the international community of ensuring a better future for the Sudan.

46. **Mr. Erwa** (Sudan) said that, while he appreciated the objectivity and clarity of the Special Rapporteur's report, he felt that his perception and interpretation of the facts were not always accurate. The Special Rapporteur had said that vast numbers of people in the Nuba Mountains had been forgotten; however, 90 per cent of the region was Government-controlled and the Government had had no difficulty in providing relief for the remaining 10 per cent. A major problem had been that of transparency; the rebels had rejected the Government's agreement with the United States to fly in relief supplies because they used the flight corridors for their own military purposes.

47. Regarding abductions, he regretted the allegation that it was rebel defence of villages that accounted for their decrease. On the contrary, although abductions were practised among the southern tribes, the Government combated the practice and thus could take credit for ensuring its decline.

48. With reference to fighting around the oilfields, it must be borne in mind that the SPLM/A was in the hands of a specific tribe; the oil region was not part of that tribe's territory and the fighting was consequently much less concentrated than the Special Rapporteur believed.

49. **Ms. Kohonen** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights), introducing the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (A/56/327) on behalf of the Special Rapporteur, said that the two missions to the Democratic Republic of the Congo had comprised visits to the three areas into which the country was divided and interviews with the President, government authorities and rebel leaders.

50. The two international wars in which the country had been engaged since 1998 (with Rwanda and Burundi in the east and Uganda in the north) had caused thousands of deaths and enormous hardship. The countries involved had exported their own ethnic and political conflicts to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and were plundering its mineral and agricultural wealth to finance death and destruction in that country, as had been thoroughly documented in the report of the Expert Panel appointed by the Security Council (S/2001/357). Although the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement of 1999 was still in force, it had brought

neither peace nor the withdrawal of foreign troops from the country. The most serious events had been attacks on defenceless civilian populations by the armies of Rwanda allied with the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD) and of Uganda allied with the Front de libération du Congo (FLC), bombing raids by the Government and the taking of foreign hostages by the Mai-Mai.

51. The advent of a new President, albeit without legal basis, following the assassination of his father, Laurent-Désiré Kabila, in January 2001, had resulted in some progress in human rights, including liberalization of the activities of the political parties and the granting of amnesties to some political prisoners; President Kabila had also accepted the commitments of the Lusaka Agreement and supported the work of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).

52. Political assassinations and torture of prisoners had, however, continued. The most serious human rights violations were the continued abuses by the Military Court, which did not restrict its jurisdiction to crimes committed by members of the armed forces, and the arbitrary acting of the international commission to investigate the assassination of the President. Freedom of expression was also seriously affected.

53. In the territories controlled by the RCD and Rwanda and by the FLC and Uganda, the most serious violations were reprisals against civilian populations and the systematic pillaging of Congolese natural wealth. There was no freedom of expression and the population remained in a state of terror. The parties to the conflict refused to comply with what had been agreed in Lusaka and ordered by the Security Council: the withdrawal of foreign troops, starting with those that had violated the territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The report made special mention (para. 18) of the support of the Ugandan forces for the Bahema in the conflict with the Balendu, which had completely destabilized the region. In another area of concern, no improvement had been recorded in the situation of women and children; at least five of the national armies participating in the war, along with Congolese and foreign guerrilla movements, continued to recruit children.

54. The Special Rapporteur was very concerned at the lack of attention that the Government in Kinshasa and the other States involved in the conflict had given to his recommendations (paras. 104-112). He wished to reiterate them and to propose the following points: the Inter-Congolese Dialogue must be resumed, either in Addis Ababa or in Durban. Countries that had violated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must comply with Security Council resolutions and the commitments made in Lusaka. Countries with economic or political interests in or which supported those countries must exercise influence to ensure that they complied with the aforementioned obligations and restored illegally exploited resources. They should further request the Democratic Republic of the Congo to establish a democratic regime which respected human rights; the same request should be made to its aggressors. Only in that way could good governance be ensured.

55. **Mrs. Booto** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that the report (A/56/327) contrasted the human rights situation in the part of the country occupied by Rwandan, Ugandan and Burundian armed forces since August 1998 (paras. 69-91) and the situation in Government-controlled territory — which was improving thanks to her Government's efforts (paras. 54-68). The report also recognized that the Democratic Republic of the Congo was the victim of armed aggression by its neighbours (para. 93).

56. Where the Special Rapporteur had failed to present an accurate picture of reality, however, was in his description of the situation in Government-controlled territory, which was lacking in objectivity. The report — clearly drafted with haste — failed to differentiate between victims and aggressors, somehow omitting to mention highly relevant past atrocities committed by the occupying forces, such as the massacring of civilians and the rape, butchering and burying alive even of pregnant women, resulting in mass population displacement.

57. Notwithstanding the groundless accusations contained in the report, the Government remained committed to democracy and the rule of law. In Government-controlled territory, nobody had been imprisoned on the grounds of their beliefs, ethnicity or sex. Moreover, a National Human Rights Conference had been held in June 2001 with the participation of 385 delegated from different parts of the country and 30 international observers, that had resulted in the adoption of a National Human Rights Charter and Plan of Action. It was to be hoped that the Special Rapporteur's resignation would pave the way for a

strengthening of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) in the field of human rights so that it might further its noble aims in close cooperation with the Government and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights at country level.

58. **Mr. Beyendeza** (Uganda) said he regretted that the Special Rapporteur was not present to respond to his delegation's questions concerning a report which was unfair and unbalanced and showed evidence of malicious intent. His delegation reserved the right to return to the issue at a later date in order to correct factual errors and distortions designed only to create unnecessary tension and confusion. Noting that the visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo had lasted 24 days, he wished to know how the Special Rapporteur had spent his time and what criteria he had employed to assess the situation in the country. The Special Rapporteur had evidently not found enough time to cross-check his facts, and had not even sought to meet with representatives of Uganda upon returning to Headquarters. It was to be hoped that his successor would prove to be more competent.

59. **Mr. Kanyemera** (Rwanda) said that the report (A/56/327) was clearly based on speculation and personal opinion. The Special Rapporteur had no proof, for example, that Rwanda had invaded the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the purposes of annexing that country's territory or that Rwanda had exported its own conflict, the history of which was well known. Besides, his Government fully intended to respect the Lusaka Agreement, including the planned withdrawal of its troops. His delegation would be submitting further comments in writing.

60. **Mrs. Stevens** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, welcomed the excellent report before the Committee, paying tribute to the Special Rapporteur's commitment to human rights and expressing regret that he would not be remaining in office. It was to be hoped that a successor would be appointed at the earliest opportunity, and that the ongoing constructive human rights dialogue with the Government and civil society in the Democratic Republic of the Congo would continue.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.